



Board of Tutors in Biochemical Sciences

History and Goals:

The Board of Tutors in Biochemical Sciences, which was established in 1926, runs the tutorial program for the Molecular and Cellular Biology and Chemical and Physical Biology concentrations. The tutorial program offers individualized instruction to all concentrators beginning at the time of declaration.

“Tutorial has given me the opportunity to work closely with a faculty member to explore research areas I’m interested in, to develop my critical thinking skills, and to grow overall as a young scientist.”

Olive Tang,
MCB ‘15

The objective of the tutorial program is to enable concentrators to learn to think critically about problems and experiments in modern biological sciences. The focus is on careful reading and analysis, not on a broad coverage of a particular field. Thus, tutorial complements and expands upon the formal course curriculum. In addition, the tutorial provides an important opportunity to meet with a member of the faculty and/or a senior scientist on a regular basis. Mentoring on career choices, research opportunities, and other academic issues are logical extensions of the tutorial.

Format and Workload:

Most tutors meet individually with students for approximately an hour at least once a month. Some tutors conduct small group tutorials. Tutors who meet with groups, of course, are also available for individual advice and scientific discussion as needed.

It is important for students to take the initiative to contact their tutor whenever a meeting is needed outside of a regularly agreed-upon schedule. Please contact your tutor in a timely fashion prior to the scheduled tutorial if you are unable to keep an appointment.

The amount of reading assigned for any one tutorial session will obviously vary. You and your tutor will probably decide together on readings to be discussed at the next session. It is reasonable to expect to put in at least five or six hours in preparation for each tutorial.

“My tutor brought life and energy to our meetings, which really built on the course curriculum and empowered me to think critically and at the frontiers of the fields I was exposed to. My tutor was a real inspiration, and I always came away from our meetings with an even greater love for biology and science.”

Manjinder Kandola,
CPB ‘14

We do not offer formal academic credit for tutorial, in order to keep the arrangement flexible and to allow for adjustment of the actual workload in response to other demands of your

program. The tutorial program is, however, a vital part of your concentration. In addition, participation in tutorial is part of the evaluation process for honors. A good working relationship with your tutor is very helpful for academic advice and assistance in planning future career goals.

“Working with students in tutorial is one of my favorite and most rewarding activities. For the past twenty years, I have taken pleasure and pride in helping my student expand the scientific foundations and explore their professional horizons.”

Debra Peattie, Ph.D.
Member of the Board of Tutors
in Biochemical Sciences since 1986

Academic Advice:

Your tutor serves as one of your academic advisors, and is also an important source of advice about research and professional opportunities. Advising opportunities are also available with the Head Tutors and the Concentration Advisor. If you have any questions or desire additional advising, please contact the Concentration Office.

Contact Information:

Sam Kunes, Ph.D.
Head Tutor, MCB

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CPB and MCB Concentration Office:

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Tutor Assignment:

You will be assigned the same tutor from year to year. This practice ensures that a member of the Board of Tutors will get to know you well.

There are, however, good reasons for wishing to change tutors. For example, you might want to work in a particular field that your current tutor feels unprepared to teach, or there might simply be a personality conflict that is best resolved by changing. If you wish to change tutors, please send a brief note of explanation to the Head Tutor or Concentration Advisor.

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